

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 097487
ORIGIN IO-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /004 R

66011
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APPROVED BY:IO/HDC:ROBERT ANDREW
-----035815 151811Z /65
R 150747Z APR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO USMISSION GENEVA 0698

UNCLAS STATE 097487

FOL RANGOON 1295 SENT ACTION SECSTATE APR 12, 1978 REPEATED
TO YOU QUOTE

UNCLAS RANGOON 1295

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SNAR
SUBJ:INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL SEMIANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT

UNDER SECTION 481 OF FAA

REF: STATE 083179

1. ACCOUNTING FUNCTION AND OTHER BUDGET AND FISCAL MATTERS
RELATING TO ANTI-NARCOTICS AID TO BURMA ARE HANDLED IN
WASHINGTON, NOT RANGOON. EMBASSY THEREFORE IS NOT ABLE TO
PROVIDE THE INFORMATION REQUESTED IN PARAGRAPH 3C OF REFTEL.

2. WITH REGARD TO PARAGRAPH 3A REFTEL, BURMA'S CURRENT ILLICIT
PRODUCTION OF RAW OPIUM IS BELIEVED TO BE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
OF 300 METRIC TONS, THOUGH ESTIMATES RANGE FROM A LOW OF 200
TO A HIGH OF 400 TONS. OPIUM PRODUCTION VARIES WITH THE
WEATHER, THE EXTENT OF BURMA ARXU-INSURGENT FIGHTING IN
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OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GUB POPPY
ERADICATION OPERATIOSS, AND MARKET CONSIDERATIONS. OPIUM
PRODUCED IN BURMA IS PROCESSED INTO HEROIN AT REFINERIES
LOCATED ALONG THE BURMA/THAI BORDER. TRADITIONALLY, THE BULK
OF THE HEROIN LEAVES BURMA THROUGH TRAFFICKING ROUTES INTO
NORTH THAILAND WITH MARGINAL AMOUNTS OF NARCOTICS EXPORTED
OVER ROUTES THROUGH RANGOON AND SEAPORTS IN THE SOUTH AS WELL

AS ACROSS THE WESTERN BORDER TO INDIA AND BANGLADESH. THESE ALTERNATE ROUTES MAY TAKE ON ADDED SIGNIFICANCE IF THE GUB AND RTG SUCCEED IN THEIR EFFORTS TO DISRUPT DELIVERIES ALONG THE TRADITIONAL ROUTES.

3. THE BURMESE CONTINUED TO MAKE PROGRESS DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD IN THEIR ANTI-NARCOTICS CAMPAIGN. IN EARLY DECEMBER 1977 THE GUB BEGAN ITS ANNUAL DRIVE TO ERADICATE OPIUM POPPIES. PARTIAL RETURNS SHOW THAT APPROXIMATELY 9,000 ACRES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED; THE FINAL TALLY IS EXPECTED TO BE HIGHER. THE 9,000 ACRES OF DESTROYED POPPY COULD HAVE PRODUCED AN ESTIMATED 48 METRIC TONS OF OPIUM. NO LARGE SCALE OPIUM CARAVANS WERE KNOWN TO HAVE TRAVELED FROM OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS IN NORTHERN BURMA TO THE THAI BORDER DURING THE SIX MONTHS UNDER REVIEW. THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT BORDER AREA REFINERIES RECEIVED SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF RAW OPIUM TO ALLOW A HIGH LEVEL OF HEROIN PRODUCTION. NO BURMA ARMY OPERATIONS WERE CONDUCTED AGAINST BORDER AREA REFINERY SITES DURING THE SIX MONTH PERIOD.

4. BURMESE ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FACILITATED BY U.S. NARCOTICS CONTROL ASSISTANCE, PRINCIPALLY HELICOPTERS. THIS EQUIPMENT IS BEING WELL MAINTAINED AND IS UTILIZED UNDER A 1974 AGREEMENT, PROVIDING THAT IT BE USED PRIMARILY FOR ANTI-NARCOTICS PURPOSES. REFLECTING OUR STRONG MUTUAL INTEREST IN CURTAILING THE FLOW OF ILLICIT NARCOTICS, WE HAVE DEVELOPED UNCLASSIFIED

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A GOOD WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE BURMESE IN THE NARCOTICS FIELD.

5. OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS, THE GUB HAS DEMONSTRATED THE CAPABILITY TO CARRY OUT EFFECTIVE ANTI-NARCOTICS MEASURES. THEY ARE SEVERELY HAMPERED, HOWEVER, BY THE PRESENCE OF ARMED INSURGENT FORCES IN MANY OF THE OPIUM PRODUCING AREAS. ALSO, THE ABSENCE OF COOPERATION BETWEEN BURMA AND THAILAND IN ANTI-NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN AN INHIBITING FACTOR AS IT AFFECTS ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS AGAINST TARGETS LOCATED ALONG THE THAI-BURMA BORDER.

6. THE FOLLOWING COMMODITIES AND SERVICES FOR THE NARCOTICS CONTROL PROGRAM IN BURMA WERE RECEIVED DURING THE REPORTING PERIOD:

A. AIRCRAFT - TWO FH 227B AIRPLANES, ONE BELL 205A -1 HELICOPTER, AND SPARE PARTS, MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT AND RELATED SERVICES.

B. COMMUNICATIONS - FM-5 AND FM-1 TRANSCEIVER ACCESSORIES.

C. TRAINING - NONE.

D. PERSONNEL - ONE US INC MEMBER ASSIGNED TO THE PROGRAM
ARRIVE ON MARCH 21, 1978. BERN UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: NARCOTICS, REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE097487
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: IO/HDC:EDDIE EDWARDS
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780162-0934
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780452/aaaabrzp.tel
Line Count: 120
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 7c0e28ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN IO
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 STATE 83179
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2954868
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL SEMIANNUAL REPORTING REQUIREMENT UNDER SECTION 481 OF FAA
TAGS: SNAR, FAA
To: GENEVA
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/7c0e28ad-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014